Job hopping can be a good strategy for young workers

By **Liz Weston**

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Dear Liz: I am a millennial and just started a new job at a very small company. I really like the work I do and the leaders of the company. However, I don't make enough to move out of my parents' home and be financially secure. I live in the Washington, D.C., area and make $50,000. For an entry-level position it's a good salary, but this area is so expensive. I wanted to stay at this company for at least two years to add stability to my resume. Now I'm considering moving to a cheaper area so I can move out on my own and not face a financial strain. But I don't want to be a millennial job hopper, and I don't want to disappoint my boss.

Answer: Being a millennial job hopper can actually be a good thing in the long run. A 2014 study for the National Bureau of Economic Research found that people who switch jobs more often early in their careers have higher incomes later in life. Economists Martin Gervais, Nir Jaimovich, Henry Siu and Yaniv Yedid-Levi contend that young job-changers are more likely to find their true calling, which leads to greater productivity and higher income. Sticking with one job can mean settling for paltry raises, while changing jobs can mean bigger jumps in pay.

Changing locations, meanwhile, can be a powerful way to boost your standard of living. Living on a below-average income in a city with above-average costs can be a recipe for misery, so congratulations on being willing to explore alternatives. Since you're living in one of the costliest cities in the U.S., those alternatives include most of the U.S.

The good news is that you have a job and a place to live, so you can take your time searching for what's next. In the meantime, you can build up your savings to help pay for the move.

As for disappointing your boss, understand that most bosses are grown-ups. They realize that people can and do move on to better opportunities.